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SUBJECT: GLOBAL ECONOMY: VENEZUELA, CLOSING OF RCTV; SAO PAULO

"Why Chavez Is A Danger"

The lead editorial in influential center-right national circulation daily O Estado de S. Paulo (6/6) maintained: "Brazil is Venezuela's second most important trade partner, after the US, and President Lula takes into consideration Brazilian companies' interests in that nation to react with less emphasis than appropriate against Chavez's attacks, even when they directly affect Brazil, as was the case of the caudillo's charges against the Congress for its motion protesting RCTV shutdown.... Protests in Latin America against this recent move by Chavez towards the installation of a dictatorship are encouraging because they have shown the presence of antibodies fighting an authoritarian contagion in the region.... If it is really a fact that Latin Americans are faced with two models of promised transformation - personified by Lula and Chavez - the Venezuelan president's angry policies are providing Lula with another opportunity to reinforce his own image, both in the Hemisphere and globally, as a leftist leader capable of "doing more to change the world" - as London's The Guardian said - than Chavez, whose left wing leanings are a poor disguise for his so far successful program to transform Venezuela into a caudillo-type dictatorship."

McMullen